

REMARKS

In this paper, claims 48, 62-64, 70-72, 148, 150 and 153-155 are currently amended. After entry of the above amendment, claims 48-72 and 145-156 are pending, and claims 1-47 and 73-144 have been canceled.

The applicant appreciates the allowance of claims 50-59, 145-147, 151 and 152 and the indicated allowability of claims 64-69, 150, 155 and 156. Claims 64, 150 and 155 have been amended to be in independent form, so it is believed that claims 64-69, 150, 155 and 156 are now allowable. The applicant also appreciates the thoroughness of the examination of this application.

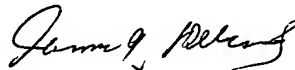
Claims 48, 49, 60, 62, 63, 70-72, 148, 149, 153 and 154 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being unpatentable over Reipl, et al (US 5,577,757). This basis for rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 48, 63, 70-72, 148 and 153 have been amended to clarify that the cleat receiving notch is dimensioned and positioned to be located beneath a sole of the boot when the boot is fastened to the binding mechanism. Reipl, et al discloses a snowboard binding mechanism wherein two support jaws (13) are disposed at lateral sides of a rear binding element (9) such that corresponding locking elements (16) lock onto projections (5) that project laterally outward from opposite rear sides of a boot (1). Reipl, et al neither discloses nor suggests a cleat receiving notch that is dimensioned and positioned to be located beneath a sole of the boot when the boot is fastened to the binding mechanism because that would completely change the theory of operation of the binding mechanism.

Claim 61 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Reipl, et al. This basis for rejection is respectfully traversed for the same reason noted above.

Accordingly, it is believed that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102 and §103 have been overcome by the foregoing amendment and remarks, and it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully requested. Allowance of all claims is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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